

Career Services for Graduate Students: A Case Study

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Graduate students provide valuable human resources to industry and academia. Little, however, is known about how higher education institutions approach career services and the career development of graduate students. This qualitative case study investigates how career services offices for graduate students have developed their career services and responded to the needs of diverse stakeholders.

Keywords: Career Services, Career Development, Higher Education

The number of graduate students is increasing due to the recent economic downturn. The tough job market and high attrition rate of graduate students have led some higher education institutions to take the career development issues of graduate students seriously and to form an organization called The Graduate Career Consortium (GCC) to unite their efforts on this issue (Graduate College Career Advisory Committee, 2003).

While the career development (CD) literature in higher education has focused heavily on career services for undergraduates, much less attention has been given to career development and services for graduate students (Cabral-Cardoso, 2001). In particular, the career paths and professional development of doctoral students have been left out in the CD literature. In human resource development (HRD), though career development has been considered a core area since McLagan's seminal study in 1989, the HRD field has contributed little to the CD issues of graduate students, who provide valuable human resources for industry and academia.

Research efforts on career services have mainly revolved around assessment tests of career interest and career aptitudes, placement issues including major decisions, interventions and practices, and partnership with student services (Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2003; Watts, Hughes, & Haslam, 2001; White & Kraning, 2001). There is a lack of research on how career services have been conceived by clients and stakeholders, and how they have been shaped by diverse needs.

The purpose of this case study is to better understand, through a case study of the Career Services Office for Graduates (CSOG, pseudonym), how higher education institutions approach career services for graduate students, especially doctoral students, and how they respond to the needs of diverse stakeholders. For this purpose, multiple stakeholder perspectives were studied in this research. The opinions and approaches of the service provider (CSOG), academic departments/advisors, and graduate students were examined. Through this case study of a career services office specializing in graduate students, a deeper understanding of the career development issues of graduate students was sought.

Theoretical Framework

Stakeholder theory (Jones, 1995) was integrated with open-systems model in the study (Katz & Kahn, 1966; Swanson & Holton, 2003). According to the open-systems model, systems such as organizations provide products and services to their environment and exchange information and resources with them. Systems cannot fully control their behavior by themselves and are influenced by environmental conditions (Cummings & Worley, 2001; Jones, 1995).

Among environmental influences, a stakeholder refers to any group that has a great interest in the organization's objectives and functions and that is affected by or can affect the operations of the organization (Cummings & Worley, 2001; Swanson & Holton, 2003). Stakeholder theory explains how organizations or their members actually behave with respect to stakeholder relationships. If organizations develop relationships with their stakeholders based on mutual trust and cooperation, organizations are successfully able to operate. According to the theory, a lack of cooperation or trust in the relations between the organization and the stakeholders causes difficulties. Continuous negotiations among the organization and the stakeholders are necessary for the organization to achieve its objectives (Jones, 1995). Feedback, information concerning the performance or the results of the system, is an important mechanism to shape the future functioning of systems (Cummings & Worley, 2001).

In the context of the current research, the career service office CSOG and its staff members are the system of the focus. Graduate students and the faculty members were identified as its main stakeholders. Though inputs,

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transformations and output consist of the main components of a system, as open-systems theory suggested, processes and behaviors in a system can be better understood through the lenses of relationships with its environment. This study is grounded in these frameworks and concepts that the career services for graduate students provided by the career office has reflected on feedbacks of its related stakeholders.

Research Questions

The research questions of this case study are as follows: How does the career services office in higher education approach the career development of graduate students?

- 1) How does the career services office deal with the academic and non-academic career issues of graduate students?
- 2) How do the career counselors respond to the feedbacks of students and faculty members?

Method

The qualitative case study method has been used in this paper for exploring and gaining a deep understanding of the issues in career services for graduate students. Case study is a powerful research method to show the complexity of phenomena, and to understand issues in their contexts through a careful examination of one or more cases. Though the findings of this kind of study can not be generalized to the whole population, they can still provide information that may be applicable to other cases (Stake, 1995).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that the results of a study that develops local, inductive theory can be used in subsequent studies to formulate hypotheses or suggest particular phenomena to test or examine. This study seeks primarily to provide a description and analysis of how career services for graduate students were approached and interpreted in a research university. It is anticipated that the results might be used in the future to guide the research and development efforts regarding career services and development of career services professionals.

Case and Participants

The Career Services Office for Graduates (CSOG, pseudonym) is a brand new office established in Fall 2003 to offer centralized career services for graduate students at a large Midwestern university in the United States. The case was selected for the following reasons: First of all, this brand new office has possibilities to show rich information about the approaches of the institution toward career development of graduate students especially since it was launched through extensive research and communication with the stakeholders. Second, the case is relevant to show the main issues of the study, which are academic and non academic career paths and the career advising. Finally, the accessibility of the site was considered.

CSOG consists of two staff members: a Director and a Visiting Assistant Director. Both of them served as key informants to this study. Two graduate students and a faculty member also participated in the study. The two students selected have been in both of the workshops or the one-on-one consulting sessions of the office. The faculty member is a graduate program coordinator of a department who has attended the information meetings of the office and who played a role in announcing the existence of the office and programs to the graduate students in his department. These participants served to show how the clients (graduate students) and another stakeholder (faculty member) experience and perceive the career services in higher education from their own perspectives. In this way, the researcher can get a diverse picture of the office and the career services the office provides.

Data Collection

The data were collected from observations of workshops, interviews, and document reviews. The details on the data sources are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. *Data Source*

Collection Method	Sources
Observation	Observation of workshops, field notes
Interviews	Interviews with staff, faculty, and graduate students, interview transcripts
Document analysis	Final Report submitted by Advisory Committee, focus group interview report, office web pages, workshop handouts, electronic newsletter

Two workshops were observed and field notes were taken. Each of the workshops lasted one hour. Semi-structured interviews, varying in duration from 30 minutes to an hour, took place with the two career services counselors, two graduate students, and a faculty member. The interview transcripts and analysis of the data were shared with the two staff members for the purpose of the member check (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The positions, pseudonym, and interview length of the research participants are described below:

Table 2. *Research Participants*

Position	Pseudonym	Interview
Director of CSOG, Career counselor	Cindy	Two interviews that last one hour each
Assistant Director of CSOG, Career counselor	Audrey	Two interviews that last one hour each
Faculty member/ graduate coordinator in a department	John	40 min. interview
Graduate student	Deonna	40 min. interview
International graduate student	Mina	Two interviews that last 30 min each

The web pages of the office, workshop handouts, and monthly electronic newsletters were reviewed. The final report, written by the Advisory Committee, and the confidential focus group data were also analyzed for the research.

Data Analysis

The constant comparative analysis method was used for data analysis of the interview transcripts, field notes, and documents (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Coding schemes were generated as warranted by the data, and the data were analyzed according to the issues the research questions addressed and the themes emerging around the research questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In order to provide a more vicarious experience for the readers, the office, the career counselors, and the program are described in as much detail as possible.

The Contexts

It was a beautiful fall day. I walked cross the Quad enjoying the colorful trees and mild weather. I sat down on a couch at the Union lobby to give myself a break after work and to wait for the workshop. Good. I relaxed with a cup of coffee thinking about what the workshop would be.

The workshop room was located just across the elevator on the fourth floor of the Union. A lady with short black hair and a professional dark red suit was checking the registry of participants at the door of the room. She smiled her greetings to people and asked for names and departments to match them with her directory sheet of pre-registration. The workshop room was rectangular-shaped wrapped in exotic floral wallpaper. In front were a computer screen and a small presentation table where there was a laptop computer and transcripts for a presenter. Two rows of tables and chairs were tightly arranged. 5:55 PM. Dozens of students had already taken their seats. It was quiet except for the sounds of taking seats and the sound of the presenter walking around. Most of the participants looked through the distributed handouts without a word.

6:00 PM. The workshop started with a couple of background checking questions.

“How many of you are doctoral students?” Ten hands went up.

“How many of you are currently in the career hunting stage?” Seven hands went up.

“How many of you’re thinking about a nonacademic track job?” Dozen of hands went up.

Audrey, the presenter, then explained how tough the current job market is and emphasized “there’s no magic formula for finding a job.” She is small and looked young, with flushed cheeks. Her voice was a little trembling but fast. She led the workshop with Power Point slides and some materials she continued to refer to on her side. An African-American girl next to me continued to look at the presentation screen and take notes while even having nuts and chips to fill her hunger. Dozens of people continued to come in and the conference room was soon full.

After a couple of PowerPoint presentation slides, the presenter showed how to access and search in ‘CareerSearch’, which, she said in a proud voice, had been recently purchased by the Graduate College. The eyes of the workshop participants look toward the screen in a quiet but very focused way. Audrey showed how to job search using key fields such as industry or area code. A guy wearing a red shirt nodded his head with a very satisfied face. There were sounds of “wows” and there was a more excited atmosphere than before. The demonstration drew a couple of questions and several went hands up.

[Vignette from Job-search strategies workshop]

Statistics Tell Us

The Career Services Office for Graduates (CSOG) was launched under the Graduate College in a large, US Midwestern university very recently, in Fall 2003. Its specific focus is to serve the needs of graduate students especially *in the humanities, the social sciences, and the fine arts*, though it serves graduate students from all disciplines. Its brochure states that the mission of CSOG is “to assist students and alumni in decision making and planning for career paths both within and beyond the academy.”

However, the initiative that made the establishment possible could be from a couple of years ago. The dean of the Graduate College had noticed a rapidly changing workplace and dismal academic job market and recognized that the graduate programs in this university did not prepare graduate students for the turbulent changes. Only a limited number of students “successfully” got jobs in the academic institutions for which most of the graduate programs on this campus prepare their Ph.D students.

There are many many graduate students who were coming here and intending to get a Ph. D. and get a job as a faculty member at a university, probably a research university. However, the statistics tell us only about 50% of students, especially the students in the humanities, fine arts, and social sciences are actually going to achieve this goal ‘cuz there just aren’t enough jobs out there. It’s incredibly competitive [Audrey].

Where do other graduates go if Ph.D. students are trained only for working in academia, but only a limited number of them are actually able to work in academic institutions, including teaching and research colleges? In reality, many graduates are “trickling out and just kind of disappearing into the night because they’re too embarrassed to either admit what the problems are, admit that their priorities have changed, that their minds have changed....” Many others are not sure what to do about it until they hit the high wall of the academic career market at the end of the road. Graduate students who are interested in non-academic careers could not get enough career guidance and support from anyone on the campus. The initial goal of the office was to help students develop ideas about alternative careers: non-academic career options. About 10 years ago, a similar initiative was tried but it “flopped due to lack of faculty support.” So this time, according to the staff, the Graduate College moved slowly and carefully to research and to get support from faculty members.

The Career Advisory Committee

A Career Advisory Committee has been a key vehicle in the establishment of the office and a compass for its direction. In Fall 2002, the Graduate College appointed a Career Advisory Committee composed of faculty members, graduate students, and other career services professionals across the campus to examine the job market and career opportunities of graduates, and to research how other universities help graduates (Final report of graduate college career advisory committee, 2002). According to the committee coordinator, the committee was a very dedicated group, each of whose members showed his/her personal interest in one way or another. Basically, it helped the Graduate College keep track of what was going on with the students and faculty members. The committee came up with findings and suggestions and with a model of the office. It put together a preliminary report of the state of the graduate career services and recommendations that laid the groundwork for the establishment of the office. The second committee was appointed in Fall 2003 and has helped the office plan and develop workshops on academic areas including academic job search strategies and interviews. Information sessions were held for faculty directing graduate students. The committee meetings and information sessions were a way of “outreach” to the faculty, seeking their understanding and support for the initiative.

The Staff

CSOG has two staff members: Cindy is the Director, with a Ph. D degree in Musicology, and Audrey is the Visiting Assistant Director, with a Master's degree in Human Resources and Industrial Relations. Both of them have previous work experience at the Graduate College as graduate student assistants.

Cindy has a diverse academic background and experiences in several areas including chemistry, piano, and history. She describes herself as a person with many interests. She, however, has consistently wanted to be an educator since high school. She reflects that she has never wanted to be a teacher in the primary or secondary area. She believes she is in the right place in terms of enjoying what she does and her job fits with her personality so that she can do academic work without too many restrictions while she works as the Director of the office. In addition, she attends conferences in career development, continues to do research in her own area, goes to conferences, and writes papers in music on her own time and on days off.

Audrey has been involved in the initiative from the very beginning: She has helped the advisory committee to research and to make a recommendation report for the establishment of the office. She has led focus group meetings with graduate students and helped to write the final report. Audrey has a professional Master's degree from the Department of Human Resources, and her husband is currently a Ph.D student on the campus.

Programs

The career services include workshops, one-on-one career consulting, and providing resources such as e-news letters and a career search database. In this section, the workshops and consulting program will briefly be reviewed.

Workshops. The office has developed a tailored series of workshops to supplement the professional development of graduate students. There are eight core workshops offered during both the fall and spring semesters, including Organizing Your Education for Options, CVs and Cover Letters, Academic Job Search, Nonacademic Job Search, Resumes and Cover Letters, Interviewing Skills, and so on. The following lists the examples of workshop topics that are offered once a year: Graduate School 101, Publishing in Academic Journals; and Scholarly Writing as

Creative Work (Workshop handouts, 2004). The office also supports research grant-related workshops such as Crafting a Fellowship/Grant Proposal and NSF Fellowships and it coordinates a Dissertation Writing Workshop and a Thesis Deposit Workshop (Electronic newsletter, 2004). The topics were drawn from the recommendations of the committee.

Some workshops are offered twice: One is for the students in humanities, Arts, and Social Science, and the other is for the students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. The reasons for the separated workshops are twofold. First, the separated workshops can be better tailored for audiences with different majors. Second and perhaps more importantly, the office does not want to crowd out the target population of students in the humanities, fine arts, and social sciences. Though there is little advertising to science students, they have come to the office and the workshops more than humanities students, whom the office has made more effort to invite.

Around 400 students attended the workshops the office offered in Fall 2003, and this number has affirmed that the staff and the Graduate College are meeting the urgent needs of the graduates on this campus. The workshops have also served as an efficient way to “reach out” to students and to disseminate information. Students get a taste of the office and a sense of what is available. As a result, the staff have seen many of the students come to the office for one-on-one sessions. So the workshops are a way to actually get students in to see the counselors.

Career consulting. Cindy and Audrey meet around 12 to 15 students a week by appointment or walk-in hours on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Walk-in hours have been very difficult for Cindy and Audrey in terms of the fluctuation in the number of students and the scheduling of work. They have, however, decided to keep the walk-in hours, believing a portion of the students might not come if they are told that they need appointments. Substantial numbers of students come with academic jobs in mind and bring their curriculum vitae (CV) and resumes. Cindy mentioned that the one-on-one session is based on her read of the student and is case-by-case. She usually does not bring non-academic options to the students who come with an interest in academic careers.

Emergent Findings

To better understand the career development issues of graduate students, two findings that have emerged from the study are summarized in this section. The first issue revolves around the perceived conflict between academic versus non-academic careers among students, faculty members, and the office. The second issue is related to academic advising. These findings describe how a higher education institution approaches career services for graduate students, and shed light on complex issues around career development and services through the case study of the CSOG.

Academic vs. Non-Academic Careers

The first issue is the tension between where career services for graduate students should be focused: academic careers or non-academic careers. The gap in perceptions and expectations for academic and non-academic career paths and career advising between professors and graduate students is taken seriously by the Graduate College and the CSOG (Final report of graduate college career advisory committee, 2002).

According to the student focus group report, students think faculty does not understand how students struggle in the current tough job market and do not see these situations as a “crisis.” For many people in this research university, pursuing a Ph.D. commonly means that the doctoral student is being prepared for working in an academic institution (Student focus group report, 2002).

They (students) feel pressure oftentimes to pursue an academic path, particularly in the humanities, where that’s the traditional- that’s the model before them. That’s what the faculty know, and that’s where the prestige within their area of study is. So they feel a lot of pressure. And most of it is implicit. It’s not like they actually have faculty members who are standing beside them saying, “You are a real failure if you don’t, you know, stay and finish a Ph.D.” It’s kind of implicit [Cindy].

The researcher has also heard voices of dissatisfaction from the student interviewees toward faculty in career advising and the staff who have met and consulted with many graduate students. The staff members are keenly aware of sharp tensions due to the different expectations between students and advisors. They themselves were graduate students on the campus and listen to many students who come to them instead of talking to their advisors.

Most doctoral students have not thought of other paths besides working in academic institutions and are not confident in finding jobs outside academia. Students who have an interest in working other than in academia have no place to receive the career guidance and support they need, and they are afraid of negative responses from their advisors such as being labeled as not serious students (Student focus group report, 2002).

Thus, originally, the non academic career path was the identified problem area. One of the purposes of the career services office is to help graduate students explore and find jobs in non-academic jobs considering statistics that show not many graduates do get jobs in the academic market (Final report of graduate college career advisory

committee, 2002). Transferable Skills, one of the core workshops, was developed to address the fact that students have many skills useful for other careers and options, and how students trained for academic careers can find other careers.

The CSOG has, however, approached this intention in a very careful way because of the purpose of the research-oriented university and the expectations of the faculty, another stakeholder. The CSOG and the Graduate College have been concerned about some negative responses toward the initiative, especially from faculty members. The dean and the staff have been trying to be sensitive to them politically. However, the process has been very smooth, which is quite different from 10 years ago when a backlash actually happened. The dean and the staff interpret the reasons for the smooth process as a changed attitude among the faculty members toward higher education due to the job market and tough situation as well as the indifference of the faculty.

Academic Advising/Consulting

Related to the first issue, the second issue that is addressed is the role of the career office in academic advising. What Cindy and Audrey have learned from running the office for a semester is that many more students are still looking for academic positions than the advisory committee expected, and they do not get much help with academic advising either. Even the students looking for academic careers want to come to the career office rather than to go and talk with their advisors. The office did not anticipate helping students with an academic job search or advising, though the advisory committee thoroughly researched practices of other universities and had focus group meetings with departments and students for about a year. It is not “where they anticipated they’d be.”

Sometimes, students think that their advisors would not understand what the students go through since their professors already succeeded in the tough academic job market (Student focus group report, 2002). They “defeated the odds” and got a job and they expect their students should do as they did. Some students do not want to see or talk with their advisors before they feel they are ready to talk with them. Some have problems relating to their advisors. Thus, they feel less pressure when coming to the career office and talking about their career planning, including seeking for “academic” advising.

The demands have led the office to adjust their services somewhat. Audrey and Cindy realize since the launching of the office that they have to serve a much broader audience than they were originally prepared for and broader topics including more academic advising. These unexpected needs brought out the qualifications issues of the staff, and adjustments in the services in terms of the topics of the workshops and the one-on-one consulting.

Faculty perspective on this issue. What do professors or academic departments think about their roles and those of the office in career advising of graduate students? The researcher met a graduate program coordinator in a program and asked these questions. According to him, since majors are getting very specialized and the professional networks of professors are very unique, the advisors and the faculty in the department, and maybe the committee members can provide much better career consulting and career advice for students, especially at the doctoral level.

People typically move with networks of colleges. General offices, like the Career services office here on campus don’t seem to have networks. They cannot develop networks and relationships for all around 125 different departments on campus. They just cannot do it When it comes to specific advice, you know, like “Is Louisiana State University HRD program is a good place to start your career if you are interested in organizational development” you know, or “Shall I apply to George Washington University?” They’re recruiting right now. I would have that knowledge. Or at least, my impression or judgment of that. But the general campus office will never know [a faculty member].

According to this faculty member, careers, especially for a doctoral student, should be planned closely with the student’s advisor and professors in his/her specific area since there is no one who knows about the specific area besides the faculty members. He also said that the contribution of the career office should be more general: how students prepare and get through graduate school, how students can get helpful tips for working on dissertations, and how students can decide on academic or non-academic careers.

The counselors’ perspectives. Surrounded by the expectations of the students and academic departments, what do Audrey and Cindy think of the roles of the career office and of the academic departments?

Lots of things really have to happen in the departments. And there’s nothing we—to some extent, we can’t do any of that...Very often many professional development activities are specific to your discipline. It’s really up to the dept. to help students identify what are the appropriate conferences to go to...So we’re not intending to replace things that are happening in the department, but merely to supplement them [Cindy].

Clearly, the staff members expect that academic departments should play a more active role, and the office is intended to merely *supplement* academic career matters by offering general seminars, providing guidelines for writing resumes or CVs, or making a Ph.D timeline paper for students’ reference. These perceptions were quite similar to what the professor participant said.

However, students coming to the office seeking advice in academic areas have made the process more complicated, and their needs are redirecting the career office. Academic advising for them includes reviewing of CVs and cover letters needed in applying for academic jobs, explaining how the academic job search works, and giving ideas on how to better equip students for the future.

And so, we said, okay, we'll do a little bit, we'll do some to support students with that. And what we found is this really overwhelming interest from students in helping them with academic career issues, shall we say. And that probably more than half of the students visiting our office are actually looking for help with applying for academic jobs. They want someone to help them clarify what a statement of teaching philosophy is.... We were expecting a little bit of that, but not as much as we've had [Cindy].

To meet the unexpected needs, the career office has been adapting its services with the help of the advisory committee that serves as a bridge, its link to students and faculty on campus. For instance, Audrey and Cindy are currently developing materials for academic interview skills in conjunction with a subcommittee of faculty members. However, the distinction between career and academic matters is not extremely clear in many cases. That is perhaps the reason Cindy and Audrey are expanding their consulting roles in academic issues, though they believe that academic departments are the right place for those roles. Academic advising is a popular new area for the brand new office. Its popularity was unexpected or underestimated in the research of the committee, but it is the area where graduate students really need help from the office. However, it raises the qualification issue or issues about the appropriateness of the staff members.

Qualifications issue. The researcher have explicitly heard and implicitly sensed some tension and reservation on some issues among the stakeholders of the Graduate College, the staff, "anonymous" faculty members, and students during the study. One of the unclear areas might be the qualifications issue of the staff as career advisors for graduate students.

I don't think they're knowledgeable about academic jobs from my experience [a Ph.D student].

However, probably, some faculty on this campus may have reservations about this type of how I am qualified to give advice [Cindy].

Neither Cindy nor Audrey has a background in career services. But the question of qualifications is not mainly about background in career services but about their capability for giving "*academic advice*." In other words, no one seems to be suspicious about their expertise in the career development area, but the issue is closely tied with academic matters. It might need more careful examination since the issue does not simply show a discrepancy in the staff's backgrounds or abilities, but reflects what stakeholders expect about the office.

Discussion

This study discussed the career concerns and development of graduate students reflected in the establishment of the career office. It also explored how the career advisors have experienced those issues through serving students. The issues in the emergent findings pertain to the overarching research question: How does the career services office approach the career development of graduate students? Especially the findings have presented academic and non-academic career issues of graduate students. It also discussed, through feedback from students and faculty members, how career counselors have responded to those feedbacks and perceived their roles. This section discusses these findings and implications in relation to the literature.

The study has described how the career services office has adjusted and tailored its services through feedbacks from its clients and stakeholders even it was very beginning stage of the career services office. Though the career services office was established with through research and interacting with the faculty members and graduate students represented by the Advisory Committee, the actual operation of the office and provisions of career services to its clients has brought more complicated and somewhat unexpected problems and directions. The career counselors have sensed those redirections and feel the needs of changes in the ways they provide career services for graduate students. These findings are consistent with the results the open-systems model suggests (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Feedback is an important mechanism through which the systems are influenced by the external forces and it affects the future functioning of the system (Cummings & Worley, 2001). Systems model and stakeholder theory provided useful conceptual frameworks to understand how these external stakeholders affect the processes of the career services and to explain adaptations of its internal behavior (Jones, 1995; Swanson & Holton, 2003).

Even in a research-oriented institution, the initiatives of introducing and recommending non-academic career paths to students do not seem to be opposed as often as before due to the tough academic job market. In terms of academic advising, all the stakeholders believe that faculty are the most knowledgeable and appropriate people to give career advising. As seen from the case, however, career services offices can provide students with comfortable places to explore and plan their careers without the risk of being judged. As the open-access model suggests, career

services offices should receive the support and involvement of the faculty in order to provide effective career services and be integrated into the overall student development program (Cappeto, 1981; McGrath, 1984).

Limitations of the Research

There are several limitations associated with this study. Although the main focus of the study was to seek deep understanding of the case in its own complexity, very small number of participants and its selection still present a limitation. Caution should be taken in applying these findings to other contexts. This study examined issues in a graduate career services office in the context of a large US research university through the case study research method. The case study method is not intended for generalization of research findings. The interest in a case study is in developing local knowledge, and each case is a unique instance from which only small generalizations can be made (Stake, 1995). However, the study was framed to shed light on the main issues the research questions address through showing the contextualized details.

Implications for Research and Practice

This study sought to understand how career services offices reflect the career development needs of graduate students and to identify ways how career services offices in higher education can better serve the career development needs of graduate students. This study is an initial attempt to answer a fundamental and important question: how can CD practitioners better meet the developmental needs of graduate students?

Although the needs of the graduate students and implicit feedbacks of the faculty have influenced the approaches to the career services in the case, it is unlikely that the career services offices blindly redirect its career development approach based on feedbacks of stakeholders. It would be very meaningful to study how career services providers balance its own philosophy of career development and needs of stakeholders and continuously create its directions of career services.

The study seeks to shed light on the issue of academic and non-academic career services especially for graduate level career services, and it has implications for the qualifications of career service counselors. It will also help HRD professionals to understand career developmental services for higher education institutions.

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